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Recipe: Mediterranean Spinach Bake

Looking for a mouth-watering vegetarian dish to whip up for dinner or lunch? Try this healthy gem from the American Diabetes Association (ADA).

Serves 6. Prep time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

3-4 slices	multi-grain or whole-wheat bread
1 1/2 Tbsp	olive oil
1/2 cup	chopped onion
2 cups	frozen loose-leaf spinach
1 1/2 tsp	dried dill weed
1/4 tsp	salt (optional)
1/8 tsp	black pepper
1/2 cup	crumbled low-fat feta cheese
1 cup	fat-free ricotta cheese
1/2 cup	shredded fat-free mozzarella cheese
1 cup	liquid egg substitute

Preparation

- Spray a 9-in square baking pan with nonstick spray. Arrange one layer of bread slices in the bottom of

the pan, cutting to fit, if necessary. Set aside. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

- Combine the oil and onion in a nonstick skillet over medium heat.
- Cook the onion, stirring frequently, until it is soft but not browned. Stir in the spinach.
- Cover, reduce the heat, and cook gently for 4 to 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Break up any big clumps of spinach.
- Meanwhile, in a medium-sized bowl, stir together the seasonings, cheeses, and egg substitute.
- Remove the pan from the burner. Stir the spinach mixture into the cheese mixture. Cover the bread slices with the mixture, spreading evenly with the back of a large spoon.
- Bake for about 30 to 35 minutes or until the filling is cooked through.

Nutrition Information:  
Calories: 207, Calories from Fat: 63g, Total Fat: 7 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Cholesterol: 12 mg, Sodium: 466 mg, Total Carbohydrate: 18 g, Dietary Fiber: 4 g, Sugars: 4 g, Protein: 18 g



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Should You Get the Flu Shot?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that nearly everyone over six months of age get the flu vaccine. Officials say it’s especially important for healthcare workers and high-risk populations to get vaccinated, including pregnant women, young children, people 65 and older, and people with chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes and heart and lung disease.

Infants under six months old are at high risk for flu complications. But they’re too young to get the vaccine. So anyone who takes care of them should get vaccinated to avoid infecting them.

The flu vaccine is given as a shot or a nose spray. The injection is approved for use in people over six months old. It contains inactivated or killed viruses. It cannot cause the flu. The nasal spray is approved for use in healthy people, 2 to 49, who aren’t pregnant. It’s made with live, weakened viruses that don’t cause the flu.

**Side effects.** Some people who get the shot may develop a low-grade fever and/or redness, soreness and swelling at the injection site. Individuals who get the nasal spray may

develop mild symptoms, including a runny nose, headache, fever, sore throat or cough. Severe reactions are rare. But call your doctor if you develop a high fever, difficulty breathing or other serious symptoms.

Some people should not get the vaccine. Among them: infants under six months old, individuals with a severe allergy to chicken eggs (the flu vaccine is grown in eggs), and those who previously had a bad reaction.

**Dose.** Adults and most children need one dose of the flu vaccine each year. Some children younger than 9 may need two doses. A high-dose flu shot is available for people 65 and older.

The new vaccine protects against three viruses that scientists believe will be most common and are most likely to sicken people this flu season: an H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the H1N1 (a.k.a. “swine flu”) virus that wreaked havoc last year.

To cut your risk of getting or spreading the flu, the CDC also recommends that you wash your hands a lot and sneeze and cough into a tissue or, at least, into your arm (*not your hand*).



# Go Green: Leafy Veggies May Cut Diabetes Risk

Here’s yet another reason to eat your vegetables. A new study shows that spinach and other leafy greens may lower your risk of type 2 diabetes.


Researchers report in the *BMJ (British Medical Journal)* that one and a half servings of green leafy veggies a day may lower your odds of developing type 2 diabetes by as much as 14 percent.

Scientists aren’t sure why. But they think it’s because of the high concentrations of vitamin C and substances called polyphenols in spinach, kale and other leafy greens.

Vitamin C is an antioxidant and polyphenols have antioxidant-like properties. Antioxidants are nutrients that boost the body’s ability to fight infections. They also block the cell-damaging effects of free radicals. Free radicals are produced in the body as well as the environment (smoking, sun, pollution) and are believed to play a role in premature aging and chronic diseases.

Leafy greens also contain magnesium. Previous studies have linked magnesium – a mineral needed for healthy bones – to a lower risk of type 2 diabetes.


People with type 2 diabetes either don’t make enough insulin or their bodies don’t use it properly. Insulin is a hormone that breaks down sugar in the blood and brings it to the cells. An estimated 24 million people in the U.S. have diabetes, including about 6.3 million who don’t know they have it. Most of them have type 2 diabetes. Risk factors include aging, obesity and a lack of physical activity.



Untreated diabetes can cause complications, including heart disease, kidney failure and vision loss.

The good news is it can be controlled. And type 2 diabetes may even be reversed with lifestyle changes like diet and exercise.

# Breastfeeding May Lower Diabetes Odds



We already know babies benefit from breastfeeding. But it seems nursing may also help keep mothers healthy.

University of Pittsburgh researchers report in *The American Journal of Medicine* that women who breastfeed may significantly lower their risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

According to the study, mothers who didn’t nurse were nearly twice as likely to develop type 2 diabetes as women who breastfed or never gave birth. Moms who nursed at least one month were no more likely to develop diabetes than women who never gave birth.

Researchers speculate breastfeeding helps by decreasing moms’ belly fat, a diabetes risk factor.

The finding held after considering other diabetes risk factors like age, race, physical activity and tobacco and alcohol use.

The study included 2,233 women between the ages of 40 and 78 years.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that mothers breastfeed for at least six months, if possible. Previous studies have also shown benefits of breastfeeding on the body. According to this study, the longer a woman breast feeds, the greater the benefits.

# “Secret” Weight Loss Weapon

Forget all those fad diets that promise you’ll melt away pounds in record time. There’s a “new” weight loss weapon that’s cheap, safe, and – (*gasp*) – actually works.

So what is this oh-so wondrous slimming potion?

*Water!*

Scientists report that dieters who downed two 8-ounce glasses of water before each meal during a 12-week study shed nearly five pounds more than those who didn’t drink water.

The study included 48 volunteers, ages 55 to 75. They were split into two groups. Both followed a low-calorie diet. But one group also drank two cups of water before meals.

The findings: The water drinkers each lost about 15.5 pounds and the non-drinkers each unloaded about 11 pounds.

Researchers believe water works simply by filling up the stomach with a zero-cal substance.



As a result, people feel fuller and eat fewer calorie-busting foods during meals.

Obesity has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and many other disorders. It puts an extra burden on the lungs and heart – and can worsen symptoms of COPD, asthma and other chronic ills.

*So drink up!*

# Cinnamon: Tasty and Healthy



Cinnamon may do more than just spice up your French toast and afternoon cappuccino. Seems it also – hold onto your shakers – may help reduce risk factors linked to heart disease and diabetes.

During a small U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) study, 22 obese volunteers with pre-diabetes (high blood sugar levels) were split into two groups. They were given either a placebo or 250 milligrams of dried water-soluble cinnamon extract twice daily.

Researchers measured the level of glucose (sugar) and antioxidants in participants’ blood at the start of the study. They measured it again after six and 12 weeks.

Antioxidants are nutrients that enhance the body’s infection-fighting ability.

They also help keep substances called free radicals (cigarette smoke, sun, pollution) from hurting us. Free radicals have been linked to premature aging and chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

The study results, published in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*: Subjects who took the cinnamon extract had 13 to 23 percent less sugar and higher levels of antioxidants in their blood.

*Sweet!*